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One-two lead defended: ŠKODA drivers keep a cool head in the heat

- › Works drivers Esapekka Lappi and Pontus Tidemand head into the final day of the Rally Poland as front-runners in the WRC 2
- › Lappi: "We managed to control the race"
- › 29.20 kilometres until the first WRC win in the Fabia R5

Mikolajki, 4 July 2015 – ŠKODA heads into the final day of the Rally Poland with a one-two lead. The works teams Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) and Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) kept their nerve in the heated battle and defended their leading positions in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) event on Saturday. Only the final 29.20 timed kilometres stand between the Czech car manufacturer and their first WRC win in the new Fabia R5.

"With the advantage on our side we don't need to push. We managed to control the race. It worked well, in particular, our Fabia R5 was perfect once again," said European Champion Esapekka Lappi. With five best times on eight stages on Friday, the Finn was the outstanding driver of the day. On Saturday, ŠKODA team-mate Pontus Tidemand took on the role of main protagonist in the Masurian Lake District, getting five best times in the WRC 2.

The front-runner of the Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) won each of the stages eleven to 13 ahead of Lappi, on fast gravel tracks running past beautiful lakes. Then stage 14 "Mazury 2" was cancelled by the organisers for safety reasons because too many fans were obstructing the track. After the enforced break, the ŠKODA duel continued with one best time each for Lappi and Tidemand. Then, on the closing stadium stage, Tidemand was just a miniscule tenth of a second faster than his team-mate Lappi.

"We made a few more changes to the set-up and the car felt fantastic," said Tidemand. "This meant we were able to make up a few seconds on Esapekka here and there. But the advantage he built up on Friday is just too big." Lappi heads to the special stage "Baranowo", which will be driven twice on Sunday, with a buffer of 37.7 seconds. "We just need to continue to keep a cool head in this heat," said Lappi.

Then it will be confirmed whether after three podium finishes in two WRC starts to date, ŠKODA can celebrate their first win with the Fabia R5 in the WRC 2 category. Lappi/Ferm won the Rally Poland once before back in 2012.

Meanwhile, the new Fabia R5 continues to enjoy success elsewhere. At the Rally Niedersachsen, the seventh event of the German Rally Championship (DRM) season, ŠKODA AUTO Deutschland driver Fabian Kreim (D) and Mark Wallenwein (D) celebrated the second one-two win in a row with ŠKODA's turbo four-wheel drive.



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Number of the day of the Rally Poland: 13

The ŠKODA Motorsport team has won 13 of the 16 special stages of the Rally Poland so far with the Fabia R5 in the WRC 2 classification. Pontus Tidemand was the fastest driver seven times, overall front-runner Esapekka Lappi was in first place six times.

Rally Poland – Intermediate standings WRC 2

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	2:17:16.6 hrs.
2. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 0:37.7 min.
3. Kruuda/Jarveoja (EST/EST), Citroën DS3 R5	+ 2:04.2 min.
4. Ketomaa/Lindstrom (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5	+ 4:35.3 min.
5. Kremer/Winklhofer (D/D), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 4:52.8 min.

FIA World Rally Championship 2 (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	22.01.-25.01.2015
Rally Sweden	12.02.-15.02.2015
Rally Mexico	05.03.-08.03.2015
Rally Argentina	23.04.-26.04.2015
Rally Portugal	21.05.-24.05.2015
Rally Italy	11.06.-14.06.2015
Rally Poland	02.07.-05.07.2015
Rally Finland	30.07.-02.08.2015
Rally Germany	20.08.-23.08.2015
Rally Australia	10.09.-13.09.2015
Rally France	01.10.-04.10.2015
Rally Spain	22.10.-25.10.2015
Rally Great Britain	12.11.-15.11.2015

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Media images:



ŠKODA at the Rally Poland:

European Champions Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) head into the final day with an advantage of 37.7 seconds over their team-mates.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally Poland:

With five stage best times, Pontus Tidemand (S) and Emil Axelsson (S) were the best team on Saturday.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been involved in the world of motorsport since 1901. The brand has taken home many trophies from the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and several famous races, such as the oldest rally in the world – the Monte Carlo, which has taken place annually since 1911.

The Fabia Super 2000 rally car is the most successful model in ŠKODA's 114-year history in motorsport. In 2014, ŠKODA won a hat-trick of titles in the Manufacturers' and Drivers' competitions in the APRC. The new reigning champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the momentous feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the Drivers' title in the ERC and then the APRC in consecutive years.

In the ERC, ŠKODA Motorsport took the title for the third time in a row in 2014, thanks to Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) with the ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000. Before Lappi, the Finn Juho Hänninen (2012) and Jan Kopecký (2013) had won the European title with the ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000.

Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000 drivers won nearly 50 national and international titles.

The International Automobile Federation FIA approved ŠKODA's new rally car - the Fabia R5 on 1 April, 2015. The new rally car was presented to the International Press in the



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Czech Republic on 15 April. The ŠKODA Fabia R5 celebrated its competitive début at the Šumava Rally, Czech Republic in 2015.

ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle production companies in the world. In 1895, the Czech headquarters in Mladá Boleslav began producing bicycles, followed by the production of motorbikes and cars.
- > currently offers the following models in the range: Citigo, Fabia, Roomster, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- > in 2014 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide for the first time in a single year.
- > has belonged to Volkswagen since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful automotive groups in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles, as well as components, engines and gear transmissions.
- > operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- > employs over 25,900 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.